

Acute shoulder dislocation

Information for patients

This leaflet gives you advice about Acute Shoulder Dislocation and how it is treated; it gives suggestions to avoid re-dislocation and provides exercises to complete after your treatment.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name and date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.
Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

What is shoulder dislocation?

The shoulder is a ball and socket joint, when the ball at the top of the arm bone comes out of this socket it is known as a dislocation.

Why does a shoulder dislocation need treatment?

When the shoulder joint has dislocated immediate medical attention is required in order to re-locate the ball back into the socket of the shoulder joint.

What happens after treatment of a dislocation?

After the joint has been put back in place, a sling known as a “collar and cuff” or “polysling” may be offered to help support the shoulder, depending on the severity of the injury and pain. This can be worn for up to two weeks to help relieve symptoms of discomfort. A short period of rest after the joint has been re-located is the best way to allow the healing process to begin (approximately 72 hours).

After this period of rest some gentle exercises as guided by your physiotherapist or GP (home doctor) is recommended to help prevent lasting joint stiffness and ongoing pain which may occur with prolonged inactivity. To do these simple exercises the shoulder sling should be removed. These exercises should be repeated three times a day every day. However, if pain is increasing then immediately stop the exercises and consult your physiotherapist or GP.

What can I do to avoid re-dislocation?

It is important to avoid positions that could cause the shoulder to re-dislocate. The most important position to avoid is holding your arm out at shoulder height or above and then rotating the arm backwards; especially if there is a force being applied in this position.



Shoulder Exercises

Begin after approximately three days rest. Remember to remove the sling whilst doing these exercises.

Use painkillers as advised by your GP and/or ice packs to reduce pain in the shoulder as required throughout the day. When using ice ensure it is wrapped in a towel. Do not apply ice directly onto the skin, apply it to the area for 10 minutes and then remove for 10 minutes. You can repeat this process as much as needed to help reduce swelling and pain.

Feelings of aching, discomfort or stretching is normal. However if pain persists longer than 30 minutes after completing the exercises then stop immediately and discuss with your physiotherapist or doctor.

1. Shoulder Flexion

Sitting – support your affected arm and move it forwards and backwards as far as pain allows up to 90 degrees in front of you. Please ensure you do not lift the arm greater than 90 degrees in front of you until your physiotherapist has directed to do so.



2. Shoulder Abduction

Sitting – support your affected arm and move it side to side as far as pain allows and less than 90 degrees. Ensure your affected arm does not go past 90 degrees to the side as directed by your physiotherapist.



3. Shoulder Lateral Rotation

Sitting – keep your elbow tight to your side and elbow bent approximately 90 degrees. Support your affected arm with your other hand. Start with your affected forearm close to your stomach. Gently move your affected arm rotating out to 90 degrees away from your stomach – so that your arm is perpendicular to your body. DO NOT move further than this. Return to the starting position and repeat.



Do these exercises 10 times each and repeat three times every day.

Your physiotherapist will then progress the exercises individually depending on the severity of the injury with the goal to return the shoulder to optimal range of movement and function. It may take several months to address any muscle imbalance with ongoing strengthening of the shoulder as identified by your physiotherapist.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you.

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: **01689 863252**

Email: **kch-tr.palskent@nhs.net**

If you would like the information in this booklet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.

Who can I contact with queries and concerns?

Physiotherapy: **01689 864632**

Occupational therapy (OT): **01689 864632**

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